

Lady Carlotta in Ottawa

illustrated by
Joanne Stanbridge

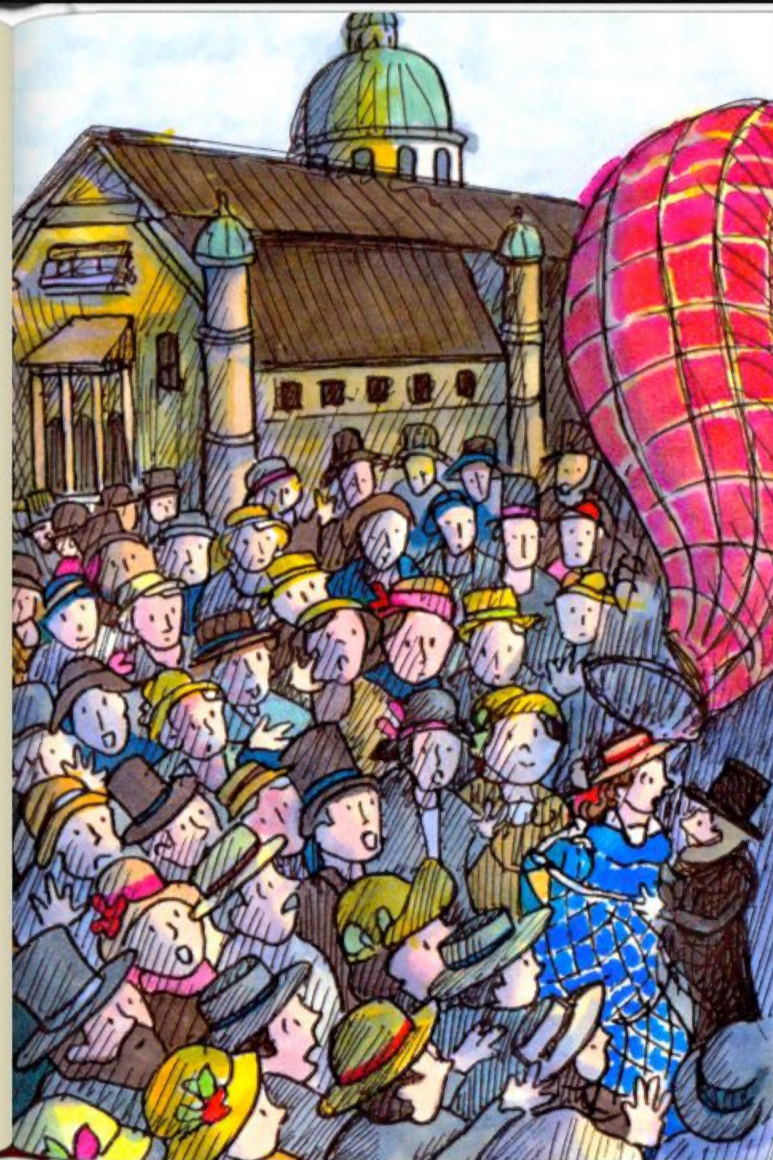


July 2, 1883 OTTAWA - The balloon was filled on Cartier Square and conveyed to the exhibition grounds by way of the canal with the help of canoes and tow-lines. The crowd pressed down to the river in well-meant efforts to help, and dragged the balloon up the bank with such eagerness that they tore great rents in it.

In its vicinity was a strong smell of gas.

The balloon became the centre of a struggling mass of people, who pressed in from all sides to see what was the matter.

Had not Carlotta acted, there would surely have been disaster.



"You can't go up," cried her husband. "The balloon is a wreck."

"I must go up," she answered. "If I don't, these people will be crushed!"

The cords were let go and the big ball with its fair freight floated away.
A great cheer arose.



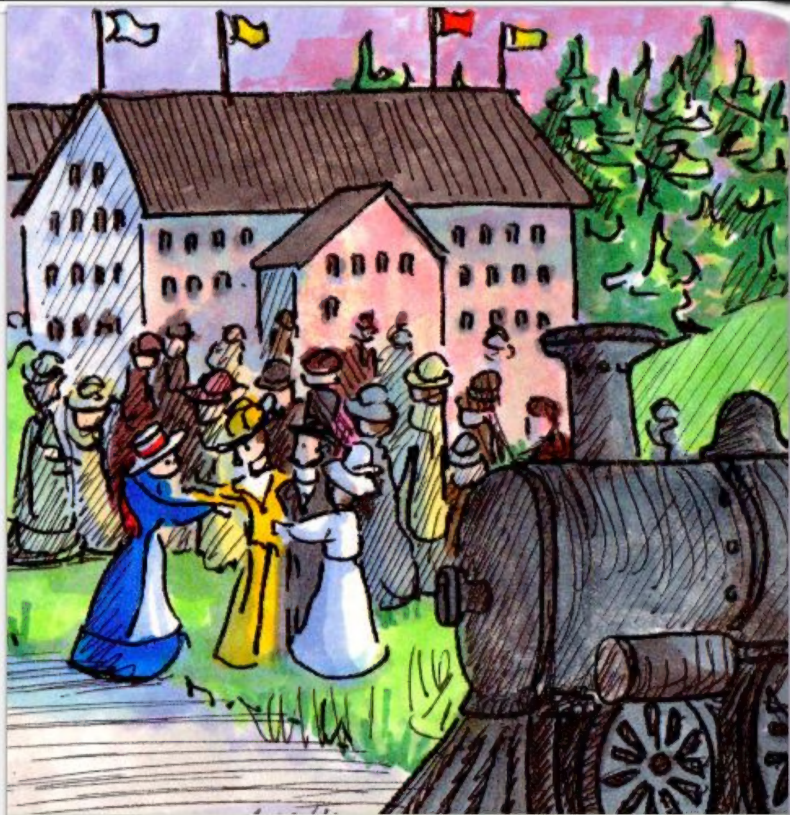
The tattered balloon raised itself two miles and then began to fall.

She caught the flapping silk and drew it down with all her weight. Instantly the air rushed in underneath and bellied out the fabric into a great umbrella.

There was some gas in the upper part of the bag, but in the main she was guiding a parachute.

She saw that she was over wooded country. Perceiving that the woods were pine, which she knew to be springy, she concluded to descend.





She found herself close to Eastman Springs Station. From there she took the train and returned the 15 miles to Ottawa. Her balloon was so badly torn that she does not consider that she can ever use it again.

The text is a shameless meld
of phrasing from
"Careers of Danger and Daring,"
by Cleveland Moffett, 1903,
and from the
Ottawa Citizen [newspaper]
3 July 1883.

This project was
part of a longer piece
submitted to
The Sketchbook Project 2011
on the theme
"In Flight."
The original is in
The Brooklyn Art Library
in New York City
and can be viewed in its entirety
on their website
www.sketchbookproject.com/brooklynartlibrary

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The illustrations were done
with Prismacolour pens on parchment-style paper.

Cover: [detail] Bird's Eye View of City of Ottawa, Canada, With
Views of Principal Business Buildings, by the Toronto Lithographing
Co. [c1895]. Panoramic Maps 1847-1921, [online database], American
Memory Collection, Library of Congress.

